

esting books of travel that we have come across for many years. There are some, though not many, allusions to birds in it, but Dr. Wollaston was busy with his plants and insects and left the "birds" to his companions, from whom we shall, no doubt, get full information on this part of the subject when the general results are published.

The volume is well illustrated by numerous full-paged plates taken from photographs, most of which are excellent. No one interested in Natural History of any kind should fail to read it.

VIII.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters addressed "To the Editors":—

SIRS,—Some account of the breeding of the Golden-eye (*Clangula glaucion*) in captivity may perhaps find a place in 'The Ibis.'

I had kept a pair of these ducks for six or seven years on a pond in my park together with a great variety of other water-fowl. The male courted the female every spring, but she had never laid any eggs. In May last the female was observed to frequent some of the nesting-boxes which are placed on poles in different parts of the pond, and in the latter half of the month two bright green eggs were found in one of the boxes and a third in another box.

As the female Golden-eye shewed no inclination to incubate, being probably disturbed by some female Summer-Ducks which laid eggs in the same boxes, the three green eggs were put under a domestic hen. After being sat upon for twenty days, on the 26th of June the three eggs were hatched, giving birth to three black-and-white ducklings. One of these died the first day, but the two others have been doing well and are alive now. The downy dress may be described as follows:—Upper parts black, crown of head glossy black. Throat and sides of head to almost under the eyes, but *not* meeting at the back of the neck, pure white. A white spot

on each shoulder and one lower down under each wing. At the root of the tail on each side of the back there is another white spot. Under parts grey, lightest on the belly. Bill black. Legs and feet black, with greenish along the toes.

As will be noticed, the coloration of the chicks resembles in general character that of the chicks of the Velvet Scoter, but in the latter the six white spots which adorn the back of the Golden-eye chicks are wanting.

The little birds were very active and soon got tame and intelligent. They lived principally on ants' eggs and duckweed. On the 18th of July feathers became visible on the shoulders. On the 8th of August the birds were completely feathered; the flight-feathers, however, were only just beginning to grow. Their appearance may be described as follows:—

Head chocolate-brown, belly and lower breast pearly white. The rest of the bird slaty black, darkest on the underside where it meets the white. The white wing-mark of the adults is present. The legs and toes are yellowish, the webs are black. The iris is chocolate-brown. The bills are rusty.

About the 25th of August the birds were able to fly and practically full-grown. The young birds differ in size in the same way as the sexes do in the adults, and are evidently male and female.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

F. E. BLAAUW.

“Gooilust,” ’sGraveland,
Hilversum, Holland.
September 8th, 1908.

SIRS,—It may interest you to know that on the passage of my ship down the Red Sea on October 2nd, 1908 (lat. 21° 25' N., long. 38° 15' E.), large flocks of Swallows settled on the vessel from about noon till about 4 or 5 P.M. The exact position, as you can see by the map, is at the narrowest part of the Red Sea and evidently chosen by the birds as the proper place to make their crossing. There would be nothing unusual in Swallows settling on the ship except on account of the large numbers on this

occasion. The birds seemed to have lost their usual instinct of direction. They roosted for the night under the awnings of the bridge deck, and many of them came into the music room, and even into the lower cabins of the vessel. At the first streak of dawn the next morning almost all of the birds set off, steering almost due south-west, but some of the Swallows were so tired and utterly done up as to be unable to fly and remained on their perches under the awnings until they collapsed, falling off one by one and dying. There were three or four different kinds of Swallows in the same flock, some had black throats, some bronze, some white. Some had the long pointed tail, with a large white spot on each tail-feather and a few white feathers on the back, whilst many of the birds had the short tail, as seen in Indian House-Swallows and Martins. The Swallows were also accompanied by several yellow Wagtails, five or six Doves, and a few Hawks, which occasionally picked up a tired Swallow. We tried to revive some of the birds as they dropped helplessly on deck by giving them a little water—it did revive them for a time, but they soon died. I have been up and down the Red Sea eight or ten times per year during the last thirty years, but never before saw so many birds on passage, nor have I ever before seen a Swallow unable to proceed on its way after a night's rest on the ship. The weather was exceedingly hot at the time, but all other conditions were normal. The birds were all fully feathered and in good condition; there was a considerable amount of droppings from them, shewing that they could not have been very long without food.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

W. H. HAUGHTON,

Commander, R.N.R.,

Aden, October 3rd, 1908.

Commander P. & O. s.s. 'Persia.'

SIRS,—During a stay of thirteen months in Russian Turkestan (from Sept. 1907 to Oct. 1908) and the Khanate of Bokhara, I formed a collection of about 730 specimens of birds and mammals in the Zarafshan Valley.